



**Southwell
Minster**

*The Cathedral and Parish Church
of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



VIGIL OF READINGS

Easter Eve

Saturday 3 April 2021

8.00pm

Welcome to this online service from Southwell Minster

The Vigil of Readings is one of the four great movements of the Easter Liturgy, together with the Service of Light, the Liturgy of Initiation, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This year, to prevent an unduly long Easter Liturgy in the Minster building in accordance with current Covid-19 guidance, we have detached the Vigil of Readings, which now takes place online, enabling us all, from our homes, to listen again to the story of God's saving purposes as we prepare, with deep, growing joy, for the proclamation of the Resurrection.

Please do join in at home as you are comfortably able.

The Lay Clerks of the Cathedral Choir are directed by Paul Provost, *Rector Chori*.

Donations in support of the mission and ministry of the Cathedral are very welcome: for more details, go to <https://www.southwellminster.org/donate/>. Thank you for your support.

Acknowledgements

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ORDER OF SERVICE

The Very Revd Nicola Sullivan, Dean of Southwell, introduces the Vigil:

Brothers and sisters,
this is the night in which our Lord Jesus Christ
passed over from death to life.

The Church invites her members,
dispersed throughout the world,
to gather in vigil and prayer.

For this is the Passover of the Lord,
in which through word and sacrament
we share in his victory over death.

As we await the risen Christ,
let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history,
recalling how he saved his people in ages past
and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer.

Let us pray that through this Easter celebration
God may bring to perfection in each of us
the saving work he has begun.

THE CREATION

READING *read by the Dean*

Genesis 1: 1 - 2: 4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day,

and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.'

And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

PSALMODY *sung by the Lay Clerks*

Psalm 104: 1-6

Praise the Lord, O my soul:

O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed
with majesty and honour.

Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment:
and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.
Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters:
and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of
the wind.
He maketh his angels spirits:
and his ministers a flaming fire.
He laid the foundations of the earth:
that it never should move at any time.
Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment:
the waters stand in the hills.

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

Dean Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

READING *read by The Revd Dr Richard Frith, Canon Precentor*

Genesis 22: 1-18

God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and

went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

PSALMODY *sung by the Lay Clerks*

Psalm 16: 8-end

I will thank the Lord for giving me warning:
my reins also chasten me in the night-season.
I have set God always before me:
for he is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.

Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced:
my flesh also shall rest in hope.
For why? thou shalt not leave my soul in hell:
neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.
Thou shalt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is the fullness of joy:
and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

Precentor Almighty God,
whose chosen servant Abraham
faithfully obeyed your call
and rejoiced in your promise
that, in him, all the families of the earth should be blessed:
give us a faith like his,
that, in us, your promises may be fulfilled;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

CROSSING THE RED SEA

READING *read by the Dean*

Exodus 14: 10 - 15: 1a

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians

whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.'

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

CANTICLE: SONG OF MIRIAM AND MOSES

Exodus 15: 1b-3

sung by the Lay Clerks

We will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the midst of the sea.
The Lord is my strength and song,
and he is become my salvation.
He is my God, and I will praise him:
my father's God and I will exalt him.
The Lord is a man of war:
the Lord is his Name.

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

Dean Lord God our redeemer,
who heard the cry of your people
and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery:
free us from the tyranny of sin and death
and, by the leading of your Spirit,
bring us to our promised land;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

I WILL SAVE YOU FROM ALL YOUR AFFLICTIONS

READING *read by the Canon Precentor*

Isaiah 54: 5-15

For your Maker is your husband,
the Lord of hosts is his name;
the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,
the God of the whole earth he is called.
For the Lord has called you
like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
like the wife of a man's youth when she is cast off,
says your God.
For a brief moment I abandoned you,
but with great compassion I will gather you.
In overflowing wrath for a moment
I hid my face from you,
but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,
says the Lord, your Redeemer.

This is like the days of Noah to me:
Just as I swore that the waters of Noah
would never again go over the earth,
so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you
and will not rebuke you.
For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted,
I am about to set your stones in antimony,
and lay your foundations with sapphires.
I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
your gates of jewels,
and all your wall of precious stones.
All your children shall be taught by the Lord,
and great shall be the prosperity of your children.

In righteousness you shall be established;
you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear;
and from terror, for it shall not come near you.
If anyone stirs up strife,
it is not from me;
whoever stirs up strife with you
shall fall because of you.

PSALMODY *sung by the Lay Clerks*

Psalm 30

I will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast set me up:
and not made my foes to triumph over me.
O Lord my God, I cried unto thee:
and thou hast healed me.
Thou, Lord, hast brought my soul out of hell:
thou hast kept my life from them that go down to the pit.
Sing praises unto the Lord, O ye saints of his:
and give thanks unto him for a remembrance of his holiness.
For his wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and in his pleasure
is life:
heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.
And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be removed:
thou, Lord, of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong.
Thou didst turn thy face from me:
and I was troubled.
Then cried I unto thee, O Lord:
and gat me to my Lord right humbly.
What profit is there in my blood:
when I go down to the pit?
Shall the dust give thanks unto thee:
or shall it declare thy truth?
Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me:
Lord, be thou my helper.
Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy:
thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.
Therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing:
O my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

Precentor Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

LET US RETURN TO THE LORD WHO SAVES US

READING *read by the Dean*

Isaiah 55: 1-11

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.

See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

CANTICLE: A SONG OF DELIVERANCE

Isaiah 12: 2-6

sung by the Lay Clerks

Behold, God is my salvation:
I will trust, and not be afraid.
For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become
my salvation:
therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.
And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name:
declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name
is exalted.

Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things:
this is known in all the earth.
Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion:
for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

Dean Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF LIFE

READING *read by the Canon Precentor*

Baruch 3: 9-15, 32 - 4: 4

Hear the commandments of life, O Israel;
give ear, and learn wisdom!
Why is it, O Israel, why is it that you are in the land of your enemies,
that you are growing old in a foreign country,
that you are defiled with the dead,
that you are counted among those in Hades?
You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom.
If you had walked in the way of God,
you would be living in peace for ever.
Learn where there is wisdom,
where there is strength,
where there is understanding,

so that you may at the same time discern
where there is length of days, and life,
where there is light for the eyes, and peace.

Who has found her place?
And who has entered her storehouses?

But the one who knows all things knows her,
he found her by his understanding.
The one who prepared the earth for all time
filled it with four-footed creatures;
the one who sends forth the light, and it goes;
he called it, and it obeyed him, trembling;
the stars shone in their watches, and were glad;
he called them, and they said, 'Here we are!'
They shone with gladness for him who made them.
This is our God;
no other can be compared to him.
He found the whole way to knowledge,
and gave her to his servant Jacob
and to Israel, whom he loved.
Afterwards she appeared on earth
and lived with humankind.

She is the book of the commandments of God,
the law that endures for ever.
All who hold her fast will live,
and those who forsake her will die.
Turn, O Jacob, and take her;
walk towards the shining of her light.
Do not give your glory to another,
or your advantages to an alien people.
Happy are we, O Israel,
for we know what is pleasing to God.

The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul:
the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple.
The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart:
the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever:
the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold:
sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.
Moreover, by them is thy servant taught:
and in keeping of them there is great reward.
Who can tell how oft he offendeth:
O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.
Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the
dominion over me:
so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence.
Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart:
be alway acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord:
my strength, and my redeemer.

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

Precentor Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
Amen.

SPRINKLED WITH THE WATER OF LIFE

READING *read by the Dean*

Ezekiel 36: 24-28

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

PSALMODY *sung by the Lay Clerks*

Psalm 42: 1-7

Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks:
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God:
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?
My tears have been my meat day and night:
while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God?
Now when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart by myself:
for I went with the multitude, and brought them forth into the house
of God;
In the voice of praise and thanksgiving:
among such as keep holy-day.
Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul:
and why art thou so disquieted within me?
Put thy trust in God:
for I will yet give him thanks for the help of his countenance.

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

Dean Heavenly Father,
by the power of your Holy Spirit
you give to your faithful people new life
in the water of baptism.
Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit,
that we who are born again
may serve you in faith and love,
and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit now and for ever.
Amen.

CONCLUSION

CLOSING PRAYER

Dean Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray,
and in your great mercy
defend us from all perils and dangers of this night,
for the love of your only Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Donations in support of the mission and ministry of the Cathedral are very welcome: for more details, go to <https://www.southwellminster.org/donate>. Thank you for your support.

Join us online or in the Cathedral tomorrow as we celebrate the glory of the Resurrection – see our [services list](#) for full details.

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